

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - PRESS REVIEW AUGUST 17

USINFO FOR IOR/M, IPS, IBS, INE

BEIRUT FOR VOA AND RAPA ROME FOR VOA

1. ISRAEL AND ARAB COUNTRIES' VERSION ON HIJACKED PLANE GETS HEAVY MEDIA REPORTING. INCIDENT BRINGS TO FORE REFLECTIONS ON ISRAEL'S OPTIONS TO COMBAT ARAB TERROR. EDITORIALS, INTRIGUED BY CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIJACK, POINT TO CHAOS PREVAILING IN AIR TRAVEL. DAYAN REPORTEDLY INFORMED JERUSALEM POST THAT ISRAEL WOULD HAVE BEEN HAPPIER HAD PLANE LANDED SOMEWHERE ELSE. DAVAR (ESHED) PREDICTS ISRAEL'S DEFENSIVE WAR AGAINST TERROR WILL TAKE NEW AVENUES. EX-COORDINATOR OF WAR AGAINST TERROR (YAARIV) TOLD JERUSALEM POST NO MATTER

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WHAT ISRAEL DOES AGAINST TERROR, THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE IT

WILL GAIN SUPPORT OF INTERNATIONAL OPINION. PRESS AND RADIO CONTINUE TO PLAY PRESIDENT NIXON'S MESSAGE ON WATERGATE, WITH WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENTS QUOTING POLITICIANS' ESTIMATE THAT US PUBLIC MIGHT RESPOND TO PRESIDENTS' APPEAL TO START LOOKING FORWARD.

2. HIJACK:(A) HAARETZ (INDEPENDENT) LAUDS ISRAEL INFORMATION SERVICE WHICH UNDERMINED LEBANESE MEDIA'S ATTEMPT TO CLAIM PLANE HAS BEEN HIJACKED BY ISRAEL.

(B) JERUSALEM POST (INDEPENDENT) QUOTES DAYAN (LOD, AUGUST 16) SAYING: "NOT EVERY HIJACKED PLANE CAN CALL LOD CONTROL TOWER AND EXPECT TO BE GIVEN PERMISSION TO LAND WITHOUT MUCH ADO...WITH ALL THE MAD THREATS OF SUICIDE MISSIONS OVER ISRAEL'S CITIES WE MUST BE MOST CAREFUL. WE WOULD HAVE BEEN MUCH HAPPIER HAD THE PLANE LANDED IN ONE OF THE NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES."

(C) JERUSALEM POST EDITORIAL REMARKS THAT IN ORDER FOR ISRAEL TO SAFEGUARD LIVES OF ITS CITIZENS IT MUST MAINTAIN HIGH STATE OF ALERTNESS AND BE WILLING TO USE UNCONVENTIONAL METHODS TO FIGHT "UNCONVENTIONAL WAR", ADDING "IT IS PRECISELY BECAUSE ISRAEL HAS ADOPTED SUCH A COURSE AGAINST HIJACKERS THAT IT HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEAL SO EFFICIENTLY WITH THIS THREAT. AND, THE SELF-SERVING INTERESTS OF OTHER STATES NOTWITHSTANDING, IT IS THE COURSE THAT MUST CONTINUE TO BE PURSUED TO CRUSH THE TERRORIST MENACE."

(D) DAVAR (HISTADRUT) EDITORIAL POINTS TO EASE WITH WHICH A PLANE IS HIJACKED NOWADAYS AND ISRAEL'S EFFORTS TO RELIEVE THREATENED PASSENGERS AND STATES: "ISRAEL WILL NOW AWAIT THE OFFICIAL AND PUBLIC THANKS OF LEBANON FOR SAFEGUARDING ITS CIVIL AVIATION, AND FOR THE APPRECIATION OF THE WORLD PILOTS' ORGANIZATION FOR THE WAY THEIR LEBANESE MEMBER HAS BEEN TREATED WITH HIS CREW AND PASSENGERS..."

3. INTERCEPTION OF MEA CARAVELLE, ARAB TERROR AND SECURITY COUNCIL VOTE:(A) HAARETZ EDITORIAL COMMENTS: "AMBASSADOR SCALI PROMISED THAT THE US VOTE AT THE SECURITY COUNCIL WILL NOT CHANGE THE US FRIENDLY RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL. THIS IS AN IMPORTANT PROMISE...BUT SHOULD CLARIFY (TO US) THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FAR BETTER HAD WE NOT PLACED SUCH FRIENDSHIP TO THE TEST BY THE IAF OPERATION AGAINST A CIVILIAN PLANE OVER LEBANON..."

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(B) DAVAR'S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (ZEMER) REVIEWS CIRCUMSTANCES CULMINATING IN DECISION TO INTERCEPT PLANE OVER LEBANON, EXPRESSES UNDERSTANDING FOR INTERNAL DOUBTS AND CRITICISM BUT CONCLUDES: "IF I WERE TO PUT MYSELF IN PLACE OF THOSE WHO MADE THE DECISION-I AM CERTAIN THAT MY DECISION WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SAME...UNFORTUNATELY WE HAVE NOT FOUND A WAY TO CONDUCT AN EFFECTIVE WAR AGAINST TERROR WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL LAW, AND WE ARE FORCED TO BREACH IT FOR THE

SAKE OF SAFEGUARDING LIVES. BLESSINGS UPON US THAT WE
ARE SUCCESSFUL IN ACTING WITH MAXIMUM SAFETY TO PRESERVE LIVES
OF INNOCENT PEOPLE..."

(C) DAVAR (ESHED) FINDS IT APPROPRIATE TO CRITICIZE SECURITY
COUNCIL AND ALL MEMBER STATES FOR CONDEMNING ISRAEL.
REVIEWING DANGERS INHERENT IN UNCONTROLLED ARAB TERROR
AND ISRAEL'S OPTIONS, ESHED WRITES: "IT SEEMS THAT ISRAEL
WILL HAVE TO CLARIFY TO LEBANON, SYRIA AND EGYPT THAT
CONTINUATION OF THE TERROR AGAINST ISRAEL...WILL COST THEM
A PRICE WHICH THEY CANNOT BEAR...THE WAR AGAINST TERROR
MUST ASCEND TO YET ANOTHER STAGE...SOONER OR LATER THERE
WILL BE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO ESCALATE OUR DEFENSIVE
ACTS AND TRANSFER THEM TO NEW AVENUES...THIS IS THE
MAIN LESSON FROM THE PLANE INTERCEPTION...AND THE
SECURITY COUNCIL VOTE..."

(D) EX-COORDINATOR OF WAR AGAINST TERROR (RESERVE GENERAL
AHARON YARIV) TALKED WITH JERUSALEM POST (GOODMAN) ON PLANE
INTERCEPTION AND ARAB TERROR. YARIV REMARKED: "IF THE
INTERCEPTION HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL,THE BENEFITS WOULD HAVE BEEN
VERY GREAT. EVEN AS IT IS, THEY ARE CONSIDERABLE...(AS A RESULT)
THE (TERRORIST) ORGANIZATION IS EXAMINING ITSELF...WE HAVE
THROWN SPANNERS IN THE WORKS...AND IF THE BATTLE AGAINST
TERRORISM IS TO BE WON, WE HAVE TO CONTINUE TO THROW SPANNERS
IN THE WORKS...NO MATTER WHAT ISRAEL DOES IN ITS FIGHT AGAINST
THE TERROR...THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE THAT IT WILL GAIN THE
SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL OPINION...THE FIGHT AGAINST
TERRORISM DOES NOT HAVE TOP PRIORITY WITH THEM..."
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